

What is claimed is:

1.           An electronic voting system comprising:  
2           a ballot card;  
3           an accepting apparatus which issues a ballot  
4 card in accordance with a vote acceptance request; and  
5           at least one voting apparatus which performs  
6 voting processing in accordance with a vote request  
7 using the ballot card,  
8           wherein said accepting apparatus includes  
9 acceptance time recording means for recording acceptance  
10 time on the ballot card when issuing the ballot card,  
11 and  
12           said voting apparatus includes  
13 timeout detecting means for, before performing  
14 voting processing upon reception of a vote request,  
15 determining whether or not a preset timeout time has  
16 elapsed from the acceptance time recorded on the ballot  
17 card to the time of voting, and  
18           warning display means for outputting a warning  
19 message when said timeout detecting means determines  
20 that the timeout time has elapsed.

2.           A system according to claim 1, wherein  
2           said accepting apparatus further comprises  
3 voter ID recording means for, when the ballot card is to  
4 be issued, recording, on the ballot card, a voter ID

5 indicating information for uniquely identifying the  
6 voter who uses the ballot card, and  
7               said voting apparatus comprises  
8               voter ID list recording means for recording  
9 the voter ID recorded on the ballot card as a voter ID  
10 list upon completion of voting processing, and  
11               voter ID list storage means for storing the  
12 voter ID list.

3.           A system according to claim 2, wherein said  
2 accepting apparatus further comprises voter ID search  
3 means for making a search to check whether or not a  
4 voter ID as a search target is recorded on said voter ID  
5 list storage means.

4.           A system according to claim 2, wherein said  
2 voting apparatus further comprises voter ID list erasing  
3 means for erasing a voter ID list recorded on said voter  
4 ID list storage means.

5.           A system according to claim 3, wherein  
2               said system further comprises a voter ID  
3 checking card for checking a voter ID,  
4               said accepting apparatus further comprises  
5 checking voter ID recording means for recording a voter  
6 ID as a search target on said voter ID checking card,  
7 and

8                   said voting apparatus further comprises  
9   checking voter ID reading means for reading a voter ID  
10 as a search target from said voter ID checking card.

6.                A system according to claim 3, wherein  
2                   said voting apparatus comprises a plurality of  
3 voting apparatuses connected to each other through a  
4 network,  
5                   said plurality of voting apparatuses comprise  
6 voter ID list recording means for recording a voter ID,  
7 recoded on said ballot card, as a voter ID list, and  
8                   said voter ID search means makes a search  
9 through the network to check whether or not a voter ID  
10 as a search target is recorded on voter ID list storage  
11 means in other voting apparatuses.

7.                A system according to claim 2, wherein  
2                   said ballot card comprises  
3                   an acceptance time recording area on which  
4 acceptance time is recorded, and  
5                   a voter ID recording area on which a voter ID  
6 is recorded.

8.                A system according to claim 2, wherein  
2                   said ballot card comprises a voting status  
3 recording area on which voting information indicating  
4 finished voting is recoded, and

5           said voting apparatus comprises voting status  
6   recording means for recording voting information  
7   indicating finished voting when voting is normally  
8   finished.

9.           A system according to claim 8, wherein said  
2   accepting apparatus further comprises erasing means for  
3   erasing voting information recorded on said voting  
4   status recording means.

10.           A method of preventing unauthorized use of a  
2   ballot card which uses an electronic voting system  
3   including  
4           an accepting apparatus which issues a ballot  
5   card in accordance with a vote acceptance request, and  
6           at least one voting apparatus which performs  
7   voting processing in accordance with a vote request  
8   using the ballot card, comprising the steps of:  
9           recording acceptance time on the ballot card  
10   when issuing the ballot card,  
11           before performing voting processing upon  
12   reception of a vote request, determining whether or not  
13   a preset timeout time has elapsed from the acceptance  
14   time recorded on the ballot card to the time of voting,  
15   and  
16           outputting a warning message when it is  
17   determined that the timeout time has elapsed.

11.           A method according to claim 10, further  
2 comprising the steps of  
3               when the ballot card is to be issued,  
4 recording, on the ballot card, a voter ID indicating  
5 information for uniquely identifying the voter who uses  
6 the ballot card, and  
7               recording the voter ID recorded on the ballot  
8 card as a voter ID list.

12.           A method according to claim 11, further  
2 comprising the step of making a search to check whether  
3 or not a voter ID as a search target is recorded on the  
4 voter ID list.

13.           A method according to claim 11, further  
2 comprising the step of erasing a voter ID list.

14.           A method according to claim 10, further  
2 comprising the steps of  
3               recording a voter ID as a search target on a  
4 checking card, and  
5               reading the voter ID as the search target from  
6 the checking card.

15.           A method according to claim 11, further  
2 comprising the steps of

3 finishing voting processing,  
4 recoding a voter ID recorded on the ballot  
5 card as a voter ID list, and  
6 making a search to check whether or not a  
7 voter ID as a search target is recorded on a voter ID  
8 list in another voting apparatus through a network.

16. A method according to claim 10, further  
2 comprising the steps of  
3 normally finishing voting processing, and  
4 recording, on a ballot card, voting  
5 information indicating that voting is finished.

17. A method according to claim 16, further  
2 comprising the step of erasing voting information  
3 recorded on a ballot card.

18. A recording medium recording a program for  
2 preventing unauthorized use of a ballot card in an  
3 electronic voting system including  
4 an accepting apparatus which issues a ballot  
5 card in accordance with a vote acceptance request, and  
6 at least one voting apparatus which performs  
7 voting processing in accordance with a vote request  
8 using the ballot card,  
9 the program being constituted by a program for  
10 executing

11           a procedure for recording acceptance time on  
12 the ballot card when the ballot card is issued, and  
13           a procedure for, when the ballot card is to be  
14 issued, recording, on the ballot card, a voter ID which  
15 is information for uniquely identifying a voter using  
16 the ballot card.

19.           A medium according to claim 18, wherein the  
2 program further comprises a program for executing a  
3 procedure for recording a voter ID as a search target on  
4 a checking card.

20.           A medium according to claim 18, wherein the  
2 program further comprises a program for executing  
3           a procedure for, before performing voting  
4 processing upon reception of a vote request, determining  
5 whether or not a preset timeout time has elapsed from  
6 the acceptance time recorded on the ballot card to the  
7 time of voting, and  
8           a procedure for outputting a warning message  
9 when it is determined that the timeout time has elapsed.

21.           A medium according to claim 18, wherein the  
2 program further comprises a program for executing  
3           a procedure for finishing voting processing,  
4           a procedure for recording the voter ID,  
5 recorded on the ballot card, as a voter ID list, and

6                   a procedure for making a search to check  
7 whether a voter ID as a search target is recorded on the  
8 voter ID list.

22.               A medium according to claim 21, further  
2 comprising a program for executing a procedure for  
3 erasing a voter ID list.

23.               A medium according to claim 21, further  
2 comprising a program for executing a procedure for  
3 reading a voter ID as a search target from a voter ID  
4 checking card.

24.               A medium according to claim 18, further  
2 comprising programs for executing  
3                   a procedure for finishing voting processing,  
4                   a procedure for recording a voter ID, recorded  
5 on the ballot card, as a voter ID list, and  
6                   a procedure for making a search through a  
7 network to check whether or not a voter ID as a search  
8 target is recorded on a voter ID list in another voting  
9 apparatus.